

Finding of No Significant Impact Gypsy Moth Cooperative Eradication Program in Dakota, Scott and Washington Counties, Minnesota

Environmental Assessment April 2019

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) evaluating the impacts of a treatment for gypsy moth in Dakota, Scott and Washington Counties, Minnesota. The EA is incorporated into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by reference and is available at the APHIS website at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/ea/> or from-

USDA-APHIS-PPQ,
900 American Blvd East, Suite 204
Bloomington, MN 55420

The draft EA evaluated the potential impacts to human health and the environment from the proposed treatment using the microbial insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (Btk) at the Lakeville (133 ac) and Stillwater (633 ac) sites, located in Dakota/Scott, and Washington Counties, MN. The use of Btk for gypsy moth eradication was previously evaluated in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as one of six alternatives for treating gypsy moth and found to be the preferred alternative for the proposed Lakeville and Stillwater sites. The EA was made available to the public for a 30-day public comment period beginning on February 22, 2019, on the APHIS web site at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/ea/>. The notice of availability was published in the Sun Thisweek Lakeville and the Stillwater Gazette. APHIS and the MDA received 15 comments on the EA. Public comments were general in nature with some expressing concern regarding human health and nontarget ecological impacts as a result of Btk treatments. These impacts were evaluated in the EA either directly, or incorporated by reference from the 2012 Gypsy Moth Supplemental Final EIS.

The analysis in the EA suggests that the treatment of gypsy moth at the Lakeville and Stillwater sites, located in Dakota/Scott, and Washington Counties, Minnesota, with Btk will not result in significant impacts to human health and the environment. Under the proposed alternative, APHIS would provide funding for GM treatments at the Lakeville and Stillwater sites. MDA would apply Btk (Foray® 48B) at a rate of 64 fluid ounces (fl oz. or ½-gallon) of product per acre using low flying aircraft. Two applications will be made within each treatment block with a 5- to 10-day interval between applications. The MDA estimates these applications to occur in mid-May 2019. The exact date of application will be timed so that the applications occur during the early larval stages when GM caterpillars hatch from their eggs and are most susceptible to treatments. The program will survey the treatment block for two years after treatment using

pheromone-baited GM traps to ensure that the treatment was effective. Traps are baited with disparlure, a synthetically produced sex pheromone that mimics the natural pheromone female GM use to attract the male GM.

APHIS has consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and has determined that the proposed gypsy moth program will have no effect on the Higgins eye pearlymussel (*Lampsilis higginsii*), snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*), winged mapleleaf (*Quadrula fragosa*) or spectacle case (*Cumberlandia monodonta*) mussels and their designated critical habitats. APHIS has determined that the proposed gypsy moth program may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*), or prairie bush-clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*). APHIS received a concurrence letter from the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service on March 15, 2019.

There are no disproportionate adverse effects to minorities, low-income populations, or children, in accordance with Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations,” and Executive Order 13045, “Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks.” Available risk assessment and toxicity data that is summarized in this EA show low risk to the human population, including children, from the proposed use of Btk. The potential for impacts to historic properties, including sites of tribal importance were evaluated pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. A letter from the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office received on March 7, 2019 stated that no historic properties would be impacted by the proposed treatments.

I have determined that there would be no significant impact on the quality of the human environment from the implementation of the preferred alternative. APHIS' finding of no significant impact from the preferred alternative is based on the results of the analysis in this EA. Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impact associated with the proposed program, I further find that no additional environmental documentation needs to be prepared and that the program may proceed.

Erin Stiers
State Plant Health Director - Minnesota
Plant Protection and Quarantine
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

April 1, 2019
Date